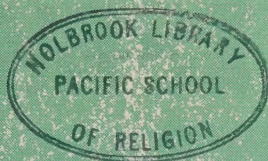


# SOCIAL ACTION



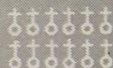
*Christians  
and U. S.  
Foreign  
Policy*

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# SOCIAL ACTION

May 1958

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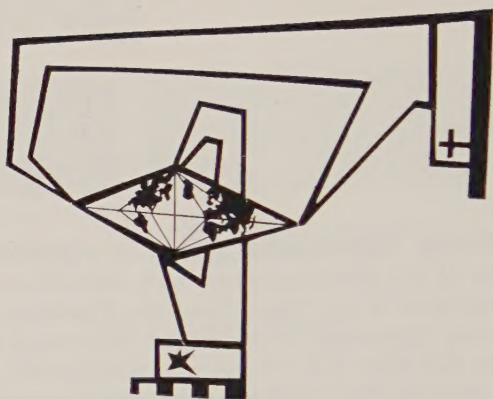


**THE ARTICLE, "CHRISTIANS AND U. S. FOREIGN POLICY,"** deals with one of the most important and difficult questions confronting Christians in our time. Does the Christian have something specifically Christian to say about the nation's foreign policy, and if he has what is it? What, in a hard, sinful, and complicated world, does the Christian say to government without, on the one hand, rendering himself futile and irresponsible, and without, on the other hand, surrendering the essence of his faith?

In his Commentary on "Christians and U. S. Foreign Policy," Hugo Thompson asks incisive questions about some parts of the article. Any effort to disprove the idea that the means to an end must always be as "good" as the end runs the risk of seeming to exempt means from ethical criticism. Perhaps the crux of the questions about the love motive in social relationships lies both in the definition of love and in our conceptions of how love is to be expressed. Ralph Hyslop's article spells out the contribution made by the church as an inclusive Christian community. This is of highest importance. Professor Hyslop would certainly agree, however, that the building of Christian community in and through the church is not a substitute for the actions, political and non-political, described in the article. It is true that Christians have hardly begun to understand that one of their functions is to "hold the world together" through the strength and the inclusiveness of the Christian fellowship. It is also true that Christians have been too much inclined to think of the church and its agencies as the sole instrumentalities for doing God's work in the world.

As Alfred Kazin says about the effort of writers to tell the story of America, "We can only feel the need of a fuller truth than we possess, and bring in our fragment and wait."

—HERMAN F. REISSIG



# Christians and U. S. foreign policy

**W**e shall be in a better position to know what Christians should seek in U. S. foreign policy if we first discuss two other questions: What are some of the basic Christian beliefs which have a bearing on this subject? What goal for human societies should Christians set for themselves, as realizable within history and as a standard by which the nation's foreign policy may be judged?

## Relevant Christian beliefs

The world and all its forms of life, including man, have their origin in God; the character and purpose of God are most clearly known through the revelation which culminated in Jesus Christ; through this revelation of himself we know the giver and sustainer of life as one who works and suffers with men, to the end that they may live with him in willing obedience and with one another in peace and mutual helpfulness.

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By Herman F. Reissig, International Relations Secretary, Council for Christian Social Action, the United Church of Christ.

All men, as children of God, have inherent worth. This worth is not given, decreased or increased, by national or racial origin, by national citizenship or by religious, cultural, or economic status.

Men are rational and moral beings; they create new forms and ways of living; they impose their ideas and their wills upon circumstances; they choose between what they believe to be good and evil; they are not merely pawns or victims of non-rational forces; they respond to motivations beyond physical self-preservation. These are consequences of their divine origin.

Men are sinful beings; they are never free from the corrupting influence of their self-centeredness and their pride; complete objectivity in matters affecting them personally is never possible; their rationality is muddled by recognized or unrecognized personal interests; their morality is partial, and frequently a device for inflating their egos; they are so high in the scale of created things that they are unable to accept their finitude and, playing God, are always a little foolish and, often, radically destructive.

Men are mortal: possessing great power, they do not have as much control as they think; death, which they may postpone but cannot avoid, puts a decisive end to their pretensions.

The first obligation resting on man is that he walk in humility, reverence, and gratitude before God: this includes respect for all that God has created. The second obligation is that he love other men: he is required to work for the fulfillment of his neighbors as sons of God.

Since man is sinful and perfection exists nowhere in the world of men, the materials and means at man's disposal as he strives for a better life are never as good as the end that has been set before him; if his angers are often destructive, even his loving is often shortsighted and harmful, and his highest ideals may betray him. Man must, therefore, work in humility, forgiving his fellowmen as God forgives him.

### **A Christian goal for human societies**

Christians must be "realistic." They must begin their work where men are, not where they ought to be. But Christians, in so far as they *are* Christians, never resign themselves to any situation which does not serve man's destiny as a child of God.



Knowing the nature of man—his littleness and his sin—the Christian will not be a utopian; he will not expect too much. But it is of the very essence of his faith that he feels and encourages a state of tension between the world as it is and as it ought to be. The first mark of those concerned with the relation of Christian ethics to the contemporary world situation should be, not that they have solutions, but that they earnestly wrestle with the problems. They will not try to escape contemporary burden and tragedy by leaping over them to ideal means and goals. But neither will they acquiesce in interpretations of the factual situation which leave little or no room for the working of the spirit of God or of man's capacity for intelligent goodwill.

Trying to avoid both an irresponsible utopianism and a cynical realism, as being equally unChristian, I suggest the conception of a *community of nations and peoples* as a goal toward which Christians can and should work. Obviously this community does not now exist. In full expression, it may never exist. It is hard to escape the conviction that basic Christian beliefs do require it. And, as I shall try to show, there are immediate and practical steps that can be taken toward it.



## WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

In a community, as distinguished from a mere aggregation of people in a geographic area, men and women have (1) a conscious awareness of belonging together, and (2) a sense of responsibility for one another. While a world culture does not seem possible or even desirable, a world moving toward community will develop (3) more common acceptance of basic values (ethos). In community the bond between the members is essentially personal—not merely material; it is voluntary and spiritual, not merely accidental or economic and political.

Community does not require uniformity in religion or in economic and political institutions. World community does not require world government. It does require some common beliefs as to the basic nature and rights of man, a sense of fellowship

underlying all personal and social differences, and the acceptance of an obligation to man as man, which transcends differences of race, religion, economic status, and nationality.

Community does not mean the absence of tension and strife. It means that the disputants understand each other even as they disagree. While finding nowhere perfect expression, community exists. It exists in families, in religious bodies, in civic and fraternal organizations. It exists, to greater or lesser degree, in towns and cities, in regions, even in whole nations.

World community is not the equivalent of the kingdom of God on earth. The kingdom of God, as a social order, could come on this earth only by the radical transformation of human nature. It can come only by an act of divine intervention, for which we may hope but of which we have no experience. Establishment of this kingdom is beyond man's capacity to effect or, even, fully to visualize. Man has a humbler role to play.

### **Men can create real community**

Men can decrease their isolation and increase their unity. They can deepen and extend the recognition of the dignity and the rights of all men. They can think of people in other lands as fellow-members of the human family—not as abstractions under national, religious, or racial labels. They can use nation-states, not as rival objects of devotion, but as useful forms of human organization within a world whose true character and destiny is community. They can work toward the common ethos necessary to world community.

### **Obstacles to world community**

**GEOGRAPHICAL SIZE OF THE WORLD.** Community is not automatically created by proximity but the possibility of community is lessened by difficulty in communication. Modern communication facilities, even when put to vigorous use, cannot overcome the natural human limitations which make it difficult to think and act in the context of humanity.

**DIFFERENCES IN ETHOS AND CULTURE.** Partly because of geographical separation and difficulties in communication, societies have evolved with profoundly different views of man and radically different religions and cultures. With very limited creative interaction between them, even points of similarity and



agreement have helped but little to create world community.

**RACIAL DIFFERENCES.** Differences between races are not an inherent difficulty; but theories of racial superiority and the treatment of the darker-skinned races by white men have made the building of real community extremely difficult.

**DISPARITIES IN LIVING STANDARDS.** Wide disparity in economic wealth, with consequent vast differences in health, education, and general opportunity for personal development, is one of the highest barriers to world community. Goodwill cannot create spiritual unity between those who live in opulence and those whose life is a daily struggle for bare existence.

**NATIONALISM.** The existence of independent nation-states is not *per se* an obstacle to world community. But nationalism as it has been practiced in modern times has erected walls of pride, self-righteousness, provincialism, and exclusiveness between the peoples of the world. Modern technology has made national governments, with their emphasis on complete independence, inadequate instruments of national welfare and of efficient participation in a world made interdependent by technology. Actually, in the new nations of Asia and Africa the struggle for freedom and self-realization has produced forms of religio-political nationalism which are all the more dangerous because of increasing world interdependence.

## **CHRISTIANS, WORLD COMMUNITY, AND THE NATION-STATES**

The place of sovereign nation-states in an increasingly interdependent world and the relation of the national self-interest to the Christian's concern for all men are perplexing aspects of the struggle for world community.

Our examination of the relation of nation-states to world community must begin with an objective fact: a world community does not now exist, and there is no world political organization which expresses the interests, needs, and purposes of humanity as a whole. The United Nations may some day evolve into such an institution but it is now an agency of the sovereign nations (governments) adhering to it, "not a supranational entity with a mind, a will, and power." We have, that is to say, no world political organization of, by, and for the world's people, but only an organization in which some national governments



debate, and try to concert, their national policies. The situation is accurately described by saying that *the world is not organized*.

Most of the peoples of the world are organized under independent national governments. To these national governments the various peoples must look for the provision of two basic needs: security and social welfare. To provide for its own people a basic security, as a society, and a social environment in which they may prosper as persons is the central and ineluctable responsibility of the national government. Individuals and groups within the nation may consider themselves under obligation to all humanity, but their government is responsible only for serving the national self-interest. In the United States this limited function of the government is defined in the oath taken by government officers "to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States of America."

### **Christian concern for world community**

But Christians can, for themselves, accept no such limitation of responsibility. Christians insist that all men are members of one family under God, and that the love of the neighbor can stop at no national boundary lines. The Christian declares, with Plato, "Above all nations is humanity." Governments may serve the interests of humanity insofar as the interests of humanity coincide with their interpretation of national self-interest. Christians may serve the national self-interest insofar as the national self-interest does not conflict with the welfare of all of God's people.

How is this difference of approach and responsibility to be dealt with by Christians in the United States? No full answer is here attempted but these suggestions may be helpful:

### **Government serves the interest of the nation**

The responsibility given to government by the nation is positive and limited. The national government exists to serve the interests of the nation; it is not constituted as an instrument for the service of mankind; it is not a world relief agency. If the people approve, the nation may give humanitarian aid outside its borders even when such aid is not related to the nation's security or prosperity. But, when given, such aid should be interpreted more as an expression of one aspect of the nation's character than as an obligation imposed by ethical principles.

When, therefore, Christians speak to government about foreign policy they should remember that the moral responsibility of government is to be morally responsible *in the service of the nation*. To speak to the national government primarily in terms of a moral responsibility to mankind is to misinterpret the place and function of national governments. Christian citizens should not assume that their transcendent obligation to the whole human family as one in God is thereby contradicted. To have a limited area of moral responsibility is not necessarily to be morally irresponsible. Christians should, indeed, have a transcendent moral perspective, and this may and should constantly be brought to bear upon the nation's conception of itself and upon its pursuit of the national self-interest. Christians should criticize inadequate conceptions of the national self-interest; they may not legitimately find fault with the definition of government as a servant of the national self-interest.



Since politics is "the art of the possible" and since the national interest is the dominant consideration in the making of foreign policy, Christians should not expect their government to pursue policies specifically designed to build world community. What, for Christians, constitutes a valid goal and a valid test does not necessarily provide

a helpful basis for governmental action. All nations are increasingly interdependent, but governments can create political and economic structures based on interdependence only where national interests tend to coincide and where a high degree of community already exists. To advocate "world government now" or schemes of world law is not helpful. Christians may, however, urge government to build the political and economic structures of "realizable communities," such as a community based on Western civilization or an Anglo-Saxon community. Such limited communities can serve the cause of peace. The fact that they would not embrace mankind does not necessarily make them wrong from the Christian standpoint.



## **Keep moral perspective on national policies**

Nations are made up of men who are both sinful and moral. This means that the international policies and practices of the nation will be an admixture of benevolent goodwill toward all men, of legitimate national self-interest, and of desire for power, prestige, and profit. But, also, because men are moral, there will be a constant temptation to clothe even the most unworthy national policies in the garments of high moral purposes. If, as in the Soviet Union, the political leaders do not themselves subscribe to generally accepted ethical standards, they nevertheless consider it good strategy to present all their aims and practices as if in the true interests of mankind. They attempt to deceive others without being self-deceived. The danger in the United States is that both government and people will convince themselves that all our international actions are justified on moral and ethical grounds. What serves the nation, we are tempted to suppose, serves God and humanity. This practice is not only morally ruinous, since it confuses good and evil and deprives the nation of the supranational moral perspective from which national conduct should be viewed; it also undermines international confidence, since other nations can easily see that our national actions are not as benevolent as we pretend.

It is a primary function of Christians to warn the nation against the constant temptation to deceive itself and to examine particular national policies from the viewpoint of an allegiance higher than the services of their country. They will not forget that if righteousness exalts the nation, self-righteousness destroys it.

## **Choose means that will achieve the goal**

In judging national policies Christians must try to avoid certain errors, which many of the most earnest and internationally-minded among them have made. They have often forgotten that their high goals must be pursued in an unredeemed world. Ends may be projected in a relatively ideal form. (The limitations of the human mind do not, however, permit us to envisage even really desirable ends except in the most general terms. Would we, for example, want a "heaven on earth" from which *all* tension would be absent?) But means must be constructed from materials that exist. If the means were to be subjected to the

same ethical tests as the ends we would, in most social situations, be unable to act at all. We can say, only, that the means employed must not be of such a character as to move us in a direction opposite to that desired end.

*Once a "justified" end is clearly projected, the choice of means is less a problem in ethics than a problem to be solved by such ordinary wisdom and information as we possess. Many different means may justifiably be employed to achieve a good end. For example, the preservation of the life and well-being of some people may, so far as we can see, require the use of coercion—even violent coercion—of others. A universal benevolence cannot, in a sinful world, be expressed in the same manner toward all men and in all situations. The simple application of ethical principles cannot answer such questions as: will human welfare best be served by maintaining United States overseas military bases, or by giving them up; should atomic weapon tests continue or cease; should West Germany be armed or neutralized? These are questions whose answers depend on a wide range of fact and surmise and our best guess as to what are the most effective means.*

In appraising the foreign policy of the United States, Christians know that there is no set of clear, absolute ethical principles which can be applied directly to each aspect of the policy.

### **Consider the interrelated impact of goals**

Christians who wish to be genuinely helpful in the conduct of foreign policy—and not merely to remain detached and critical—will also be aware that in many contemporary situations more than one good end must be taken into consideration. The goal of the absence of strife cannot be served with a single mind if the absence of strife means, in fact, the perpetuation of injustice. Freedom is a good end, but there are situations in which the goal of order must take precedence. The self-determination of peoples as contrasted with empire rule, was, especially during World War I, regarded as an unmitigated good, but if the break-up of an empire results in the creation of nations which are neither economically viable nor able to defend themselves, the good of peoples has not been served.

It is surely good to feed the hungry, as with United States surplus food, but if the giving of large amounts of grain to a



country results in disorganization of the country's economy or in severe injury to other exporting countries, more harm than good may be done. The distribution of food is, therefore, not merely a question of ethics but also a technical problem for economists and politicians. This illustration may, however, serve to point up a Christian function about which there need be no "however's," "ifs," or "buts." To possess food, or any kind of wealth, and to be reluctant or unwilling to share it with those who need help and can use it is unethical, immoral, unChristian. Christians have the function of creating an attitude or mind-set which will make it possible for the practical administrators to use United States resources wherever good can be done with them.

### **National self-interest includes magnanimity**

Christians have an important role to play in seeing to it that the American people so interpret the national self-interest as to include the fundamental American moral ideals. If it is a truism, it is a truism often forgotten that the American way of life includes the ideal of a refuge for the persecuted and the homeless; it includes the Bill of Rights and the preamble to the Declaration of Independence; it includes the magnanimity of Abraham Lincoln. It is to the self-interest of the United States to preserve the American character, and the American character is betrayed and subverted when the nation thinks only of preserving its territory, wealth, and political independence. The United States is, in significant degree, the product of an essentially moral and ethical philosophy. If the nation follows a narrowly selfish path or builds power for its own sake or permits patriotism to take on the posture of cold indifference toward "foreigners," it does not act in the true national self-interest.

### **U. S. interests related to those of humanity**

Christians should be the first to point out that the real interests of the United States coincide in many important ways with the wider interests of all humanity. Aid to the underdeveloped nations is aid to the United States. High tariffs, once defensible in the interests of our country but always injurious to other countries, are now hurtful to that free flow of international trade which it is to the interest of the United States to

encourage. Help in protecting freedom in other countries is now indispensable to the preservation of freedom in the United States. So far from hesitating to use this approach, Christians ought to be thankful that, in our time, national self-interest and concern for humanity so nearly converge upon one path.

## **HOW CHRISTIANS WORK FOR WORLD COMMUNITY**

**IMAGINATIVE IDENTIFICATION.** Christians should, as part of their religious obligation, seize every opportunity to surmount the barriers inherent in geographical distance, in the size of the human family, and in the limitation of knowledge and concern. This may be done by imaginative identification aided by study, by travel, by frequent association with people of other nations and cultures who are visitors in one's own country. If they are to help create community, such study, travel, and associations must be undertaken seriously, with a genuine desire both to give and to receive, to teach and to learn. A Christian will remember always that men and women, whatever their color, religion, culture, or nationality, are children of one God and so, beneath all their divisions, members of one indissoluble family.

**CREATIVE SHARING.** The Christian's goal is not to impose upon all men his own religion, economic system, political ideas or general culture. He will promote world community by encouraging the creative sharing of the true beliefs and best insights of all religions and cultures. The Christian believes that in Jesus Christ God has given the world a unique and indispensable revelation of Himself. He does not believe that "all religions are equally true." Nor does he believe that a greater and truer theology will evolve out of a process of adding up the best in all religions. Nevertheless, the interpretation and practice of the Christian faith may be enriched and improved as it filters through the minds and experiences of peoples who seek God and salvation in other than Christian ways. The Christian will look for and expect to find a part of the word of God in other religions.

For the work of the Christian Church in non-Christian parts of the world this means, not less assurance about the fundamentals of its own faith, but a more creative and mutual sharing. It means an appropriate awareness that the truth of the Gospel is not the same as our truth and that Christians may learn from



non-Christians, as well as teach them. Taken at its best, the Christian Church, at work in many lands, makes a profoundly significant contribution to universal community.

**THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.** This statement of the United Nations is probably our best expression of a universal ethos. Produced and accepted by representatives of many nations, and many differing cultures, races, and religions, the Declaration should be, for all concerned to create world community, a beacon and a charter for action. The Declaration goes beyond the enumeration of rights and says something of utmost importance about man. "All human beings," says Article I, "are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Communists fought against this statement, seeing correctly that if men are "born free and equal in dignity and rights" the whole materialistic, irreligious conception of man, including the Marxian notion of his relationship to the state, collapses.

Of profound significance for Christians, as well as for others, is the fact that, for the first time in history, we have, not an enumeration of the rights of Americans or Frenchmen or Englishmen, but a declaration of *human* rights. For this every Christian should be thankful. It is a milestone in human history. To work for the observance of the rights and responsibilities enumerated in the Declaration, beginning in our immediate communities, is an effective way to help create world community. When the majority of human societies accepts these rights as the spirit and the law of society we shall be well on the way to world community.

**ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATIONS.** The foundations of a common ethos are being laid through religious instrumentalities, such as the World Council of Churches. That organization brings together persons from many nations and cultures. Trying always to deal with current issues on the basis of Christian imperatives, undistorted by purely national views, it should have the earnest support of all Christians in every nation.

**THE UNITED NATIONS.** This organization with its Specialized Agencies, is more than a forum for discussion, or an agency for action on current world problems. In addition to having given us the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it helps in scores

of ways to bring governments and peoples out of their isolation into confrontation with the world. It makes possible a constant interaction of minds. By putting persons of diverse backgrounds at work together, it modifies and corrects the singular and the provincial habit of mind. For the Christian the United Nations is a powerful tool in building world community.

**RACIAL UNITY.** Every Christian who works to remove the segregation of races contributes something of first importance to world community. It is obvious that progress toward our goal is impeded, if not effectively frustrated, if one-third of the human family is at odds with two-thirds of it. Wherever the Christian struggles for acceptance of man as man, without regard to color—in the towns and cities of the United States, in his own church, school, or business, in Africa, in Asia—he works for a world that can be called a community.

**EXCHANGE OF PERSONS.** The interchange of students and scholars, the sending and receiving of religious, professional, labor, and business delegations are other useful methods of building the common ethos necessary to world community.

**ECONOMIC ADVANCE.** To work toward the reduction of disparities in wealth is a major obligation for Christians in the United States. Important ways in which Christians can work at this task are:

*Investing private capital in underdeveloped nations* under conditions which are fair to the country as well as to the investor. Christians, whether as investors or as government officials, should take a lively interest in such investments.

*Giving economic aid through large-scale, long-term loans.* Since ordinary banking rules often inhibit, or prohibit, the loans required, national and international governmental loan institutions must play an important role. The new United States Development Loan Fund is a step in the right direction.

*Sharing technical skills* on a greatly expanded basis, through governmental as well as through private agencies. Since a serious obstacle to the expansion of this work is a dearth of qualified people, government should sponsor a program of training, beginning at the college level.

*Easing international trade restrictions.* International trade is important for the livelihood of almost all the world's people. It is a matter of life or death in such countries as Britain and



Japan. The Reciprocal Trade Agreements legislation is an indispensable item in the furtherance of trade. Christians should understand that those who, in the contemporary world, are mainly interested in protective tariffs are working against the cause of world community. The nations need a central office for the discussion and administration of trade agreements. The Organization for Trade Cooperation (O.T.C.), set up by the United Nations, performs this function. Christians who wish to express their good will in practical ways will insist that the United States join it.

*In sum: A community of nations and peoples seems a necessary expression of basic Christian beliefs. A high degree of community—far beyond what we have today—is realizable within history. And there are definite and practical ways in which all of us can work toward this goal.*



## commentary

By Hugo W. Thompson, Professor of Religion, Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota; and a member of The Council for Christian Social Action.

**H**erman F. Reissig's important essay, "Christians and U. S. Foreign Policy," should have wide and thoughtful consideration. Too often, the "Christian ethic" has been stated in such vague terms that it means only that "we should be good," and then "goodness" has been defined in terms of culturally conditioned views which have not been analyzed critically on Christian grounds. This essay defines Christian perspective and relates it to specific and current issues.

The following comments are offered as a supplement to, rather than in contradiction of, Mr. Reissig's essay. I am in so much agreement with both the general approach and the major content of the article that I differ with him on only a few points. However, I want to ask these important questions: Is his stimu-

lating statement of relevant Christian beliefs adequate? Just what is the nature of the "community" which the Christian seeks, and what is its relation to political structures, to the Kingdom of God, and to the church? Can political choices be "Christian" when, as indicated, they combine good and evil? What is the relation of moral or Christian criteria to ends and to means? What is true "national self-interest" and how is it related to political realities and to Christian criteria? Space permits comment on only a few of these questions.

### **Can means be separated from ends?**

There is a question whether means can be separated from ends as much as is suggested. Agreed, that the moral value of means will lie in the service they render to moral ends. Agreed, that the errors of "good people" often arise from the mistaken attempt to substitute moral motives for facts and hard thinking. Agreed, that haggling over every decision could frustrate action. It remains true that ends and means are inseparable from each other and neither can be exempt from moral judgment without creating moral chaos.

"Ends" or goals, detached from specific plans of implementation, may lead to dangerous illusions. Mr. Reissig's essay is good because it relates implementation to theological goals. Moralistic mouthings that do not get down to cases leave the dangerous illusion of justification. Likewise means, excused from ethical judgment on grounds of expediency or efficiency, are apt to be both immoral and dangerous. Mr. Reissig's own illustration of surplus foods gives an excellent example.

If the sovereignty of God is taken seriously, his will and his processes are relevant to all our judgments and acts. It is our predicament that action intended to influence one social situation may have unpredictable effects elsewhere. In a world where we cannot be sure of all the results of a given act, Christian views as to how the created universe operates give significant insights as to probable consequences. When an act seems to lead toward a good end, but also appears to have evil in itself or in its consequences, that evil is a warning. We should seek better means. In God's sovereign economy there is a realistic causal link between the morality of means and the goodness of consequences which actually follow.

Evil means corrupt the development of good ends. Take the matter of atomic weapons. The argument usually runs that the end (containment of Russian communism) justifies the means (power of retaliation, therefore superiority in atomic weapons, therefore nuclear tests). Omitting practical as well as theoretical questions arising around each step in this argument, consider the main point. The issue here is a moral, as well as a practical, dilemma between means. Atomic weapons have usefulness, but also some dangers: e.g., fallout. Renunciation of atomic warfare also has dangers. Questions of effectiveness as means, moral implications and consequences are all intermingled. To omit the ethics is as dangerous as to omit the politics.

### **Can a "Christian" choice contain evil?**

The real objection is to false and evil moralizing. One example is the attempt to cloak the inevitably evil elements of our actions with pious protestations of purity. Another example is the tendency to substitute consideration of motives for hard-headed and realistic appraisal of facts and probable consequences in the world as it is. At both of these points Mr. Reissig is right and the U.S. Government, our citizens, and our churches have been guilty of such moralizing.

The solution lies in a more careful analysis of choices, and especially of the relation between what would be perfect and what is obligatory. Most choices involve complex interrelations of good and bad. Sometimes, all available alternatives involve more bad than good. Shall we say that "there is no Christian choice" because the absolute good is not immediately possible? That would destroy all morality! Right action is not impossible: it lies simply and always in the choice of the best available alternative.

To say positively that we have a Christian obligation to work for expanded foreign aid is not to overlook or deny the fact that there are both practical and moral dangers in this program. It is to say that this choice is better than other available alternatives when judged upon a Christian scale of values, and hence is a Christian demand. But note! The Christian also recognizes the evil elements in his choice, and has the further obligation to seek refinements of the program, or other alternatives, which offer a better choice next time.



Ethical judgment is not confined to weighing good ends against each other but involves *judgment*—intelligent balancing of considerations in which not all is known and it is hard to weigh each known fact or value. Therefore, it is not legitimate to rule out world government, or the pacifist way of “speaking truth to power,” or radical rejection of atomic weapons, or unilateral disarmament or many other alternatives. These are legitimate alternatives within the range of Christian perspective. The choice of alternatives is worthy of solid Christian debate. Christian “realism” should not lose its open-mindedness!

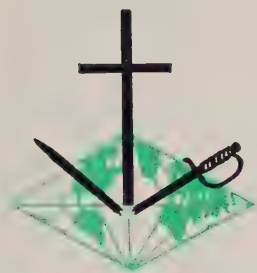
### **What is true “national self-interest”?**

The argument of “national self-interest” is similar to the familiar statement: Everyone acts in accordance with what he wants most, including the saint and the self-sacrificing mother; therefore, no ethic is valid except one based on selfishness. The question is not whether we do as we are impelled to do by our own motives; but whether human motivation includes “other-concern” or consists only in “self-concern.” In foreign policy, the question is: “What constitutes self-interest?” Mr. Reissig rightly contends that when viewed from a Christian perspective self-interest includes magnanimity. If this is true, why not urge it upon the makers of foreign policy?

### **Is love a practical basis for society?**

Nothing in this commentary should divert anyone from facing the issues Mr. Reissig has raised. Common sense, no matter how enlightened, is not an adequate guide to Christian action. We need a sustained effort to find the will of God among the issues of our day. For this we need more serious study of the Bible and of the convictions derived from it. We need faith. There is always danger that the current call to “realism” will limit our outlook to American self-interest. The realism of Jesus insisted (contra modern realists) that love is an effective motive of men, that justice will be achieved only through an appeal to love, and that loving justice is not only an ethical standard but *the* practical basis for human society. We should ask of foreign and domestic policy, as well as of personal action, whether loving justice is sufficiently used both as a standard of ethical judgment and as an effective motivational force.

# Christian community and world order



Christians are asking with increasing seriousness what their contribution can be to the creation of world order. The fact that the question is raised is an indication that the Christian churches have taken greater responsibility in this realm in recent years. However, the question often relates to individual responsibility rather than to the resource and strength of the Christian movement. This fact suggests that the Christian church has not sufficiently realized its own character and capitalized upon its own existence as a world community in the midst of other communities in the world.

## **The church: an inclusive world community**

The first fact to be noted about Christianity is that from the very outset it has been a world-embracing community. Early in the development of Christianity, it was decided to admit into the Christian fellowship persons of all races and social groups. This decision led to an understanding of the meaning of Christian fellowship which has never submitted to the parochial limitations which nations and even smaller communities attempt to impose.

A most important feature in the history of Christianity in the past fifty years has been the growing realization of the fact that the Christian church is a world community. Through the missionary and ecumenical movement, local congregations have become aware of their membership in the world-wide Christian

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By Ralph Douglas Hyslop, Director, Program of Advanced Religious Studies, Union Theological Seminary; and a member of the Council for Christian Social Action.

fellowship. In times of difficulty and danger, they have received strength to remain faithful to the Christian ethic because of the support of this community.

The greatest contribution which the Christian can make to the building of world community may be to realize to the fullest extent the meaning of Christian community. This will include the most immediate and practical steps to realize the full meaning of Christian community in the local setting and the most imaginative and far-reaching actions to dramatize its significance in world movements.

### **Community based on trust, not likeness**

It is hardly possible to convince a world whose primary characteristics may be suspicion and rivalry that the Christian faith has anything to offer, unless the Christian churches themselves demonstrate the possibility of a meaningful community that is created not on the basis of likeness but of mutual trust and dependence.

The variety and richness of background of the members of churches often cannot be realized fully in the membership of the local church. It is possible, however, for church members who may be very much alike to realize that they are part of a total Christian fellowship which includes the most diverse races and cultures and knows no barriers erected on the basis of color or class.

A remote and abstract consciousness of the variety of background of church members is not a very helpful factor, unless the congregation is determined that the ideal of variety shall become a reality in its membership. The most impressive contribution of the Christian community to world order will be for each congregation to understand the complex and varied composition of the whole church; to recognize that this is what the family of God is intended to be; and to demonstrate it to the world.

### **God is the source of the Christian community**

The source of life and hope of this community is the gracious acts of God and the continual renewal by him of the life of his people. It is not because of perfect virtue that Christians historically have been known as saints; but because they are able to live in the world as those who received their light and power



from beyond it. There must be in this world of fear and tension some groups of people who are able to live without the haunting fear of their fellowmen and the constant expectation of betrayal, which is characteristic of so many today.

The life of faith is never possible in perfect form, but the expectation of the Christian community is that its members shall demonstrate courage which does not rest upon armaments but upon the protection which faith provides. It is expected of the Christian, not that he will be able to steady his mind and heart in the presence of obvious peril by some great exertion of the will, but that he will be sustained by the mutual dependence of fellow Christians upon each other and upon God who has revealed his love and purpose in Jesus Christ. It is right to affirm that this community is a sacramental fellowship. Its life is shared with Christ who died for all mankind and who called his followers to live for the world for which he died. Undergirding all the duties which the Christian owes to society and the allegiance which he gives to the state as a citizen is the primary allegiance to God who gives him the responsibility of demonstrating that this world and its history are finally under the divine majesty and subject to the divine will.

The whole church demonstrates that God is the source of its life when it partakes of Holy Communion. This sacrament symbolizes the readiness of the church to be broken in order that the world may know the loving and serving character of the community which bears the name of Christ. It is not simply worship that must be sacramental, but the shared life of the Christian church. The result of this shared life must be the confidence which enables the Christian to depend upon God, rather than upon himself, or even upon the multiplication of his powers in the nation and its might.

### **Indispensable contributions**

The contributions of the church which are indispensable in the achieving of world order are to give a living example of community, to strengthen its members in resisting fear and despair, and to celebrate the giving of God's own love and power to the world. This is what the church must be within the world. It is not primarily a giver of law, but a giver of love; and love can be given only in action.

# Scott high deals with racial tension

*Marc Van Wormer, a senior in Toledo's Scott High School, describes a racial incident and how the tension was released.*

**F**or some time, the community around Scott High School has been changing. The area which once belonged to the rich is now occupied by people of the lower middle class. Negroes and whites live where once there were only white people.

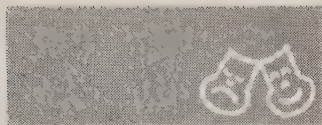
Scott High School was prepared for these changes when they came. While racial tension occasionally flared up near the school, Scott always remained an island of peace, under the leadership of a dedicated principal, R. J. Langstaff.

This year the Scott seniors smashed tradition and elected a Negro girl, Janet Quinn, as queen. She was not elected by a majority, but her plurality was so great that it was evident that white students had voted for her. Soon after her election, there was a reaction from outside the school. Indignant parents called asking for a confirmation of the election. Rumors spread, many of them vicious. Gradually tension seeped into the school.

The rumors increased. It was said that the band was on strike; that Janet's white attendants would not serve; that there had been a bloody riot. One night five senior boys hung an effigy to a tree in front of the school.

A meeting of the upper classes was called. The Student Council president introduced the principal, who told the students that this was their meeting, and that they should talk their problems out. One of the two white girls who had run against Janet said she would be proud to be an attendant to the queen. A white senior demanded that those who had hung the effigy come forward. There was no response. The innocent asked forgiveness from the innocent. Tensions disappeared.

Scott High School had proved that people of varying backgrounds can live together. Janet was crowned as Thanksgiving Day queen amid loud and prolonged applause. And, on a cold, rainy Thanksgiving Day morning, Scott won the football game for its queen.—MARC VAN WORMER, Scott High, '58, Toledo, Ohio.



### SAYONARA

As I write this review, the spell of *Sayonara* is still upon me. This Warner Brothers picture is a film everyone should see. Almost every human emotion is portrayed in this beautiful picture.

*Sayonara* is the story of a young American pilot in the Korean war, who falls in love with a beautiful Japanese dancer. Marlon Brando plays the part of the young officer and the beautiful Nisei actress Miiko Taka portrays his destined wife.

I have never been much of an admirer of Brando, but my adverse opinion has been radically altered. While he never quite makes me believe that he is from the South, he does evince warmth and sensitivity. It will take me a long time to forget hearing him say, "O, my God, O my God," when he discovers the lifeless bodies of his two close friends, Kelly and his Japanese wife, wrapped in each other's arms. They had chosen death together rather than face separation. He was a soldier ordered to return to the U.S.A. without his wife, whom he loved more than life itself.

Throughout the film, there is conflict between duty and love,

and the duty falls short of the love. It is assumed that American boys must keep away from Japanese women or, if they do have a relationship, it must be temporary. Love must not enter. After all, these people are yellow; their culture is different; most of them are not Christians; they have different eating habits; their theatre is strange; and didn't they start the war; and weren't they barbaric. The Americans make little attempt to understand the Japanese or to appreciate their culture. Lloyd (Brando) senses under the spell of love that the color of one's skin, the slant of one's eyes, the way one dresses mean very little.

When Hani-ogi doubts that she and Lloyd should marry because of injustice to the family that might be, he replies that their children "will be half Japanese and half American, half yellow and half white, half you and half me." It's just as simple as that, he says. Perhaps it is just as simple as that. Perhaps a good many of our conflicts could be solved if we were not so introspective.

Go to see *Sayonara*. It will bring you many beautiful scenes from a very old land and



an ancient culture. You will be enchanted by the beauty of its women and the love of Lloyd for Hani-ogi. And perhaps you will be more than a little ashamed that we have ever imagined we were so superior. Where love is, God is!

#### THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI

*The Bridge on the River Kwai* is one of those great pictures which we are privileged to see only once or twice in a lifetime. Small wonder that it has been nominated for so many awards. Technically, it seems to be perfect. The acting is superb; and Alec Guinness and his opponent, the Japanese Sessue Hayakawa, are excellent.

I'll never forget the tune those British soldiers sang as they marched under the leadership of Guinness, the English commander, into the Japanese prison. They were exhausted, wounded, defeated; but they were proud. They were British soldiers, and their leader was determined that they should act as British soldiers, even when prisoners of war.

The film portrays Colonel Saito's (Hayakawa) attempt to break the spirit of Guinness and force him to accept his status as a prisoner. But he does not break his spirit. Guinness builds the bridge, and insists that the workmanship be first-rate—after all, British soldiers must do nothing shoddy!

But the bridge is destroyed by

British commandos the day it is to be dedicated. When attempting to prevent its destruction, Guinness is killed by men from his own country. His sense of duty and devotion to the military brings his destruction. One of the last things you see is the British doctor, also a prisoner of war, watching the death of Guinness and the Japanese commander and the destruction of the bridge and of the train as it starts to cross the river Kwai. He cries in an anguished and impassioned voice, "Madness, madness, madness!"

And it is madness! You may have some nostalgia for the sense of duty of a Guinness. You may secretly admire the sort of society which Guinness is defending, one in which those with more responsibility have a paternalistic concern for the less fortunate. But we know that those days are past. Men are rising up all over the world and demanding the right to live as free men, the right to love, and the right to live in a warless world.

#### THE MARK OF THE HAWK

Filmed in Africa, *The Mark of the Hawk* received the family medal award of *Parent's Magazine* in March, 1958. It was filmed by the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. in an attempt to boost the cause of missions and yet appeal to church-goers and non-church-goers alike. It is a professional job. The photogra-

phy is excellent, and the cast and story are more than adequate.

The story is of a young African, Obam (Sidney Poitier) who is torn by the desperate conflict between the faith which the white missionaries have given him, and the violence of Communist-inspired natives longing for freedom. When urged to move slowly and patiently toward native independence, he says: "You will not reach him with anger; don't tell me I shall reach him with love!" Yet, love is what does make possible a plausible solution.

The missionary dies at the hands of natives, while attempting to save them from almost certain death, after a raid on a white plantation. The missionary's death profoundly moves Obam, who, we are led to believe, resolves his conflicts and leads his people peacefully to-

ward eventual freedom. Eartha Kitt adds her charm and beauty as Renee, the wife of Obam.

The moral is a little too obvious for artistic theatre, but the film is good. There is enough suspense sprinkled with romance to keep your attention. It's a tragic story of dark Africa, where white men have made so many mistakes. But it's not a hopeless story! You leave the theatre with the feeling that something can still be done to redeem both ourselves and Africa. Our arrogant ways and our unapologetic feelings of superiority can only be redeemed by genuine commitment to the Christ who taught us that we are all children of God whether we're black, yellow, brown, or white, rich or poor.

—JOSEPH D. HUNTLEY, Associate Minister, Broadway Congregational Church, New York, N. Y.

### *book review*



**Ethics and United States Foreign Policy**, by Ernest W. Lefever. New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1957, \$1.25.

Ernest W. Lefever is one of a small group of Christian scholars who have combined the study of theology with a mastery of one of the social sciences. He

has become competent in political science and especially in the field of foreign policy. This book is an excellent presentation of what has come to be called a "realistic" view of the relation between ethics and foreign policy.

Dr. Lefever writes with re-

markable clarity and with discrimination about the objectives that should govern American policy; the problems of the cold war; the role of such alliances as NATO and of the United Nations; the nature of diplomacy and the difficulties which democracy creates for it; and the way in which public opinion should influence policy. He expresses his great debt to the theology and ethical analysis of Reinhold Niebuhr and to the work of such experts on foreign policy as Professor Hans Morgenthau, George F. Kennan, and Paul H. Nitze.

### **Opposition to abstract moralism**

Dr. Lefever has in part a polemical purpose for he criticizes views of foreign policy which he associates with abstract moralism, with utopianism, with various forms of pacifism. He believes that characteristic errors of American religious leaders are to distrust "power politics"; to expect nations to serve ideals that may not be consistent with basic national interests; and to favor multilateral policies through the United Nations as always superior to a strong American policy that is guided by our own national objectives.

Dr. Lefever is extremely effective in criticizing the kind of interest in the United Nations which assumes that it can become a substitute for an American foreign policy, that the UN

is in itself an independent political force for peace that can function apart from the struggles for power among its members. Enthusiasts for the United Nations may be repelled by much that Dr. Lefever says, but I believe that he provides a very sober and constructive statement as to what the United Nations has done and can be expected to do under present conditions.

### **Biblical view of human nature**

Dr. Lefever grounds his "realism" in the Biblical conception of human nature which recognizes the finiteness and the sin of man. He believes that many statesmen who have had to deal with the real alternatives of political life are wiser in their understanding of the ambiguities of human nature than the more idealistic religious leaders who exhort them to serve moral ideas which are irrelevant.

He is very far from being cynical for he believes that our policy should be guided by the moral values which we cherish as a nation. He refers in this connection to "the concepts of justice and freedom," "the habits of democracy and fair play, and the attitudes toward the rights and welfare of peoples beyond our borders." He sees a vast difference between the two sides in the cold war, which must be described in moral terms. Statesmen are necessarily concerned about the national in-



terest. However, they should interpret that interest broadly and emphasize the mutual interest between our nation and other nations in the free world, and among the neutral nations whose freedom from Communist domination is good for them and for us.

### **Moral insight and politics**

I commend this book very strongly for its brilliant way of relating moral insights to political sophistication. It is a valuable corrective for the illusions which are most common among Protestant social idealists who have long made peace one of their chief "causes." Every reader should be the wiser after reading it.

I believe, however, that Dr. Lefever tends to identify ethics too closely with Western strategy in the cold war. He is right in the basic methods of his "realism." However, he tends to see the world too exclusively in terms of the American position in the cold war, which is based upon the Atlantic alliance and concerned chiefly to counter the military power, the economic penetration, and the ideological attraction of the Communists. He is rightly critical of the policy of Eisenhower and Dulles both on account of its moralisms and on account of its emphasis upon "massive retaliation." He is right on most concrete issues involving military balance, economic policy, and relations with

China. But there is a static atmosphere about most of the book and there is just a bit too complacent an acceptance of the present stalemate.

The book was probably in print before the effects of the missile race could be realized. It is certainly far less likely that a balance of terror will prevent war now that both sides have inter-continental missiles and are mobilized to strike a decisive blow in a matter of minutes. There is probably less significance today than there was a year ago in the idea that, if war does come, we can at least prepare to win it so that we, rather than the enemy, will be able to dictate the terms of peace.

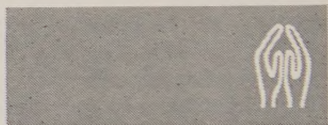
I found myself in considerable disagreement with the first pages of the book which strongly attack the American policy of disassociating this nation from the British and French in their attack on Suez. I agree with Dr. Lefever that our spokesmen were far too moralistic and self-righteous in their condemnation of our "staunchest allies," but it may still be true that the British and French attack represented a policy that was not viable in 1956. It could only create an explosion in the Arab world which it was intended to control. It made no sense to be so careless of the feelings of the whole Afro-Asian world for there is power in that area that cannot be disregarded with impunity. Dr. Lefever is right in calling at-

tention to the fact that a majority vote in the United Nations is no guarantee of the virtue of a policy, but again he is too heedless concerning the effect of flouting it.

Perhaps now Dr. Lefever would himself like to add a chapter on steps that might lead

us out of the stalemate toward some kind of "accommodation" with Russia; and he would be right if he insisted that these would depend upon our power as well as upon our wisdom.—  
JOHN C. BENNETT, Dean, Union Theological Seminary, New York.

### *resources for worship*



#### **Scripture**

*Romans 6:1-11*

*II Corinthians 5:18-21*

*Psalms 37*

*Isaiah 33:15, 16*

*Matthew 5:17-20*

#### **Hymns**

O God of Truth, Whose Living  
Word Upholds Whate'er  
Hath Breath  
Thou Lord of Light, Across  
the Years  
Eternal God, Whose Power  
Upholds

#### **Litany**

*Minister:* Almighty God, who art the ruler of men and of nations, to thee do we lift up our hearts and voices, our praise and adoration. For the glory and the wonder of the universe which thou hast made, for the limitless expanses of thy creation which far outreach the

comprehension of man's mind,

*People:* We praise thee, God Almighty.

*Minister:* For the gift of life with all of its richness and its opportunities,

*People:* We praise thee, thou giver of every good and perfect gift.

*Minister:* For the knowledge of thy word, spoken to us with penetrating power and clarity,

*People:* We praise thee, O thou source of all truth and light.

*Minister:* For the glory of thy being and thy mighty acts of redemption showing forth thy purpose of creation and redemption in our Lord, Jesus Christ,

*People:* We praise thee, our Father.

*Minister:* Almighty God, who art righteous altogether, we are deeply aware of the sinfulness which stains and spoils thy good gifts in every area of our life

and thought. For the constant tendency to become absorbed in self and in our own problems without living steadily in thy presence and in the light of thy Word,

*People:* We pray thy forgiveness.

*Minister:* For the lack of imagination which prevents us from seeing our neighbor's welfare and the needs of other nations as clearly as our own,

*People:* We ask thy mercy.

*Minister:* For the failure to deal courageously and forthrightly with the complex and difficult situations in which we are involved,

*People:* We pray thee to forgive us.

*Minister:* For the blindness that sometimes keeps us from perceiving that as members of the human race our best decisions can but approximate thy purity and thy perfection,

*People:* We pray thy forgiveness.

*Minister:* For the unwillingness to give ourselves wholeheartedly to partial achievements when ultimate solutions lie beyond our power,

*People:* Forgive us, merciful Father.

*Minister:* Teach us, good Lord, to live as citizens of the Kingdom, who look forward to a city which has foundations and whose builder and maker is God. Deliver us from self-righteousness and overconfidence in a complex and difficult world.

*People:* We pray thy help, O Lord.

*Minister:* Guard us against hasty and unwarranted judgments, but give us something of the patience which our own salvation requires of thee.

*People:* Make us humble, our Father.

*Minister:* Give us the courage to be firm in the right as thou dost give us to see the right, and ready to build for peace and justice, step by step, as we are given that opportunity.

*People:* Teach us, thou Source of all truth and light.

*Minister:* Grant unto us hope and faith in the face of great dangers and the possibilities of world-wide destruction, that we may be humble instruments for the fulfillment of thy purposes.

*People:* O help us, Lord of the heavens and of the earth.

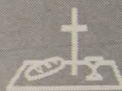
*Minister:* Almighty God, who art the author of our salvation and without whom we can do nothing, give unto us who are members of thy church, and to all men, a true sense of thy abiding love and power that we may so acquit ourselves now and at all times, that we may be taken up by thee and fitted into the high and holy task of working toward the coming of thy kingdom upon the earth.

*People:* To thee be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

—WALTER S. PRESS, Pastor,  
Bethlehem Church (E&R)  
Ann Arbor, Michigan.



## coming events



- JUNE 20-22** *Churchmen's Fellowship Conference on the Responsibility of the Churchman as a Citizen, Collegeville, Pa.*
- JUNE 24-30** *General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, Boston, Mass. CSA meeting on Friday evening, the 27th, Vera M. Dean, speaker.*
- JUNE 30-JULY 12** *Race Relations Institute, Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn.*
- JUNE 30-AUGUST 11** *European Seminar. Leaders, Rev. and Mrs. Galen R. Weaver.*
- JULY 1-5** *West Coast Christian Social Action Institute, Mill Valley, Calif. Dean, Rev. Huber F. Klemme.*
- JULY 8-12** *Midwest Christian Social Action Institute, Lakeland College, Sheboygan, Wis. Dean, Rev. F. Nelsen Schlegel.*
- JULY 15-19** *Central States Christian Social Action Institute, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. Dean, Rev. Ray Gibbons.*
- JULY 22-26** *Eastern Christian Social Action Institute, Framingham, Mass. Dean, Rev. Myron W. Fowell.*
- AUGUST 8-27** *Mexican Seminar. Leaders, Rev. and Mrs. Huber F. Klemme.*

*For more information write the Council for Christian Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., OR 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio.*

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